

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

I.—HOW THE MONGOOSE COUNTERACTS SNAKE BITE.

With reference to my letter of the 27th of March regarding the habits of my crab-eating mongoose (*Herpestes urva*) I was told the other day by a Burman that these animals have a patch on the tongue which contains medicine to counteract a bite from a poisonous snake. I examined carefully the tongue of my mongoose and found it to be of normal red colour except for a small patch in the middle about the size of an elongated 3 penny bit. This patch is dark grey in colour and covered with fine spines of what appears to be hair. I do not know if this is recorded in the smaller species of red snake-catching mongoose. It is not altogether unlikely that this rough patch on the tongue could serve for the purpose of cleansing a wound inflicted by a poisonous snake. I would be very grateful if you would let me know if you have ever heard of this theory before and whether the small species of red mongoose has a similar rough hairy patch on the tongue.

AMHERST DISTRICT,
MOULMEIN.

A. L'E. BROWNLOW,
District Superintendent of Police.

[The idea that mongooses are immune to the bite of the cobra and resort to the eating of various roots and herbs to counteract the effect of the poison is very prevalent. But the story about the patch on the mongoose's tongue, containing medicine to cure snake-bite is a new one. The central patch on the tongue of the mongoose is composed of numerous papillae. These horny papillae are to be seen on the tongues of many carnivorous animals. They are encased in horny pointed sheaths. Their function is purely mechanical. The numerous rigid points give the tongue the action of a rasp designed to remove remnants of flesh adhering to bones, etc. These conical papillae tend to form spiny patches on the fore part of the tongue and the patch referred to has probably the function which we have indicated.

While the blood of the mongoose, like the blood of cats, has a certain resistance to snake venom, a mongoose, once injected with a fully lethal dose, will not survive. Eds.]

II.—A LARGE PANTHER.

(*A correction*).

I find that in your issue of the Society's Magazine, vol. xli, p. 656, you have been kind enough to publish an account of the World Record Panther shot by me.

I find however that owing to some oversight in my Office the name of wrong Taxidermist has been entered. The skin was